

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 1-hour Ozone in Pointe Coupee Parish

Prior to the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act, the EPA identified and designated nonattainment areas with respect to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). For such areas, States submitted SIPs to control emissions and achieve attainment of the NAAQS. Pointe Coupee Parish was originally designated as nonattainment for ozone on March 3, 1978. The SIP for Pointe Coupee was first adopted in the early 1980's.

Pointe Coupee Parish was a rural ozone nonattainment planning area prior to 1990. On November 15, 1990, the CAA Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) were enacted (Public Law 101-549, 104 Stat. 2399, codified at 42 U.S.C. 7401-7671q). The ozone design value for Pointe Coupee for the years 1988 through 1990 was 0.127 parts per million (ppm), which would have classified the parish as a marginal ozone nonattainment area under the CAAA. However, since the parish is contiguous to the Baton Rouge Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) and had two large sources of nitrogen oxide emissions, it was classified as serious by operation of law and included as part of the Baton Rouge serious ozone nonattainment area pursuant to sections 107(d) and 181(a) of the CAAA (56 FR 56694, November 6, 1991).

In order to demonstrate attainment with the 1-hour ozone NAAQS, the state collected the required ambient monitoring data in Pointe Coupee Parish that showed no violations of the 0.12 ppm 1-hour ozone standard; developed an ozone maintenance plan for the parish in accordance with section 175A of the CAAA; and on December 20, 1995, submitted to EPA for approval a request for redesignation to attainment and the ozone maintenance plan. The request was accompanied by ambient air monitoring data that showed no violations of the NAAQS standard of 0.12 parts per million (ppm) for a period of three years and a maintenance SIP for ozone.

On July 22, 1996, EPA published a direct final rulemaking approving a revision to the existing Louisiana SIP to redesignate Pointe Coupee Parish to attainment for ozone (61 FR 37833). At the same time that EPA published the direct final rule, a separate notice of proposed rulemaking was published in the Federal Register (61 FR 37875). This proposed rulemaking specified that EPA would withdraw the direct final rule if adverse or critical comments were filed on the rulemaking within thirty days of its publication. The EPA received a letter containing adverse comments regarding the direct final rule on August 21, 1996, and published the withdrawal of the direct final rule on September 25, 1996 (61 FR 50238). EPA responded to the comments and finalized its

decision to approve the ozone maintenance plan and the redesignation of Pointe Coupee Parish to attainment for ozone effective December 20, 1996 (62 FR 648, January 6, 1997).

1.1.2 8-hour Ozone in Pointe Coupee Parish

On April 15, 2004, the EPA designated and classified areas for the 8-hour ozone NAAQS (69 FR 23858, April 30, 2004). Pointe Coupee Parish was designated attainment with an effective date of June 15, 2004

1.2 Geographic Location/Parish Description

Pointe Coupee Parish is located in southeast Louisiana and has a total area of 591 square miles. The parish seat is the city of New Roads. The land is mainly made up of prairies, but there are some swampy areas in the western part near the Atchafalaya River, and a few low bluffs. It has been determined that Pointe Coupee's levees lining the Mississippi River are the best maintained in the state of Louisiana. Agriculture is predominant in the area, with hundreds of acres planted in soybeans, sugarcane, cotton, corn and vegetables. Industry includes a power plant, a sugar mill, and pecan shelling plants, a cotton gin and a grain elevator. Pointe Coupee Parish has a population of approximately 22,763 as of the 2000 Census.¹

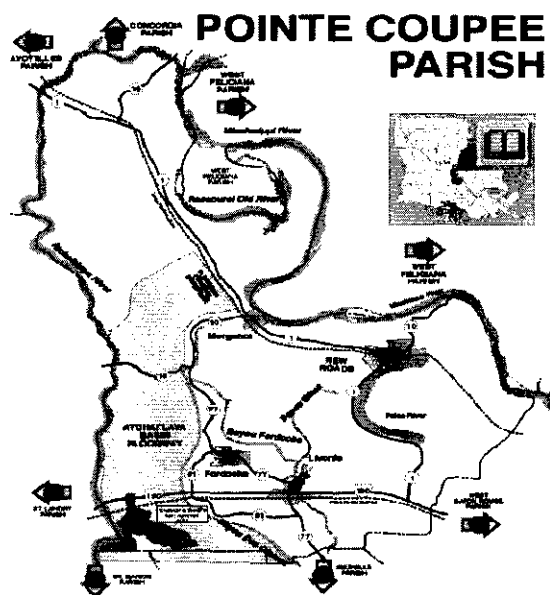


Figure 1: State Map Illustrating Pointe Coupee Parish

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pointe_Coupee_Parish,_Louisiana

1.3 Public Notice

In accordance with La. R.S. 49:950 et seq., and to comply with 40 CFR 51.285 Public Notification, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality published a notice seeking comment on this SIP revision on December 20, 2006 in the *Louisiana Register*. A public hearing concerning this proposed SIP revision was held at 1:30pm on January 24, 2007 in the Galvez Building, Oliver Pollock Room C-111, at 602 N. Fifth Street in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Interested parties are invited to submit written or oral comments on the proposal at that time. The comment period closed on January 31, 2007. Copies of the notices, hearing transcript, comments, comment summary and responses to comment are included in Appendix C.